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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 000320

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TAGS: PREL PTER PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTER QURESHI STEPS OUT ON
ORGANIZING INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO PARALLEL U.S.
STRATEGIC REVIEW OF PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY

REF: ISLAMABAD 313

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Foreign Minister Qureshi called in the Ambassador, February 13, to review next steps on U.S.-Pakistan strategic coordination following the visit of Special Representative Holbrooke. Qureshi expressed pleasure with the results of the Special Representative's first visit to Pakistan and reiterated his optimism about the trajectory of bilateral cooperation and coordination.

¶2. (SBU) As he had proposed during the Holbrooke visit, the Foreign Minister reported that he has organized a Pakistani interagency committee to develop a Pakistani strategy that will parallel the strategy being developed by the U.S. He reported that the following individuals will participate in the committee:

- Foreign Minister Qureshi
- Governor, Northwest Frontier Province, Owais Ghani
- Secretary, Foreign Affairs, Salman Bashir
- Secretary, Defense, General (retired) Aktar Ali
- Secretary, Interior, Kamal Shah
- Secretary, Finance, Waqar Masood
- Secretary, Narcotics Affairs, K. B. Rind
- Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadiq
- DG/ISI General Pasha
- DG/Ops and Plans, Joint Staff Committee, General Kassam Qureshi
- DG/MO Javed Iqbal
- Additional Secretary for Afghanistan, Foreign Affairs, Haroon Shaukat
- Additional Secretary for the Americas, Foreign Affairs, Attiya Mahmoud

¶3. (C) Qureshi explained that he is contacting the members of the committee and plans to schedule their first session "very soon." He intends to ask each of the participants to make a presentation on their agency's perspective regarding the key issues. In response to a question on the scope of his initiative, Qureshi indicated that the strategic review would be "cross-cutting" and would include potential ramifications of developments in Afghanistan on the situation inside Pakistan.

¶4. (SBU) When the Pakistani interagency team has developed its strategic concept, they would like to travel to the U.S. to coordinate with the U.S. task force being led by Bruce Riedel. The Foreign Minister is anxious to travel at a time when the team can be received as well by Secretary Clinton, National Security Advisor Jones, and other senior leaders both in the Administration and in Congress. Given his travel schedule and what he understands of the Secretary's commitments, Qureshi suggested that March 16/17 or March 12/13 will work best. His preliminary thinking is to bring a sub-group of his task force to the U.S. to work with counterparts, likely to include the NWFP governor, Foreign Secretary, Interior Secretary, DG/ISI Pasha, and DG/MO Javaid

Iqbal. Qureshi noted that he will be traveling to Colombo for the SAARC ministerial, February 27/28 and will be in Tehran for meetings with his Iranian counterpart in early March.

¶5. (C) In connection to his travel to Colombo, Qureshi advised the Ambassador that he had sent an SMS message to Ambassador Holbrooke requesting his assistance in encouraging Indian Foreign Minister Mukherjee to meet with him on the margins of the SAARC ministerial. As had Foreign Secretary Bashir in his briefing to diplomats on the results of the GOP's Mumbai inquiry, February 12 (reftel), Qureshi stressed that the Pakistani report demonstrated that it is serious, resolute, and sincere in its commitment to cooperate with India on the matter. He expressed the hope that the report would help improve the atmosphere between the two countries and that this effort could be furthered in Colombo.

¶6. (C) Comment: Qureshi is enthusiastic about the prospects for using the strategic review as an opportunity to deepen U.S.-Pakistani cooperation on the key issues facing the two countries in the region. He has put together a strong task force that is well-positioned to develop a Pakistani strategy. We recommend that Washington respond to Qureshi's proposals positively.

PATTERSON